



**Diane Bukowski and Timothy Greer's testimony  
for bills barring JLWOP and Edward Sanders.  
Before the Michigan Senate Judiciary Committee  
May 6, 2009**

Edward Sanders grew up with Mr. Greer, but unlike that friend, who has come home to work as a paralegal on behalf of the homeless, Edward has languished behind bars since 1976, when he was 17. I have visited him numerous times both as a friend and as a reporter for the Michigan Citizen in Detroit.

Mr. Sanders is a prime example of a Michigan prisoner who has utilized his time behind bars in a productive fashion, obtaining a bachelor's degree and paralegal certification, and ministering to the legal and spiritual needs of other prisoners. I feel he would be an asset to the community, teaching law, as he would like, or in any other capacity. He is brilliant, compassionate, and extremely competent.

**Edward Sanders with daughter Shay**

He tells me now, "I accept fully the responsibility for returning back to a situation where there had been an argument; everyone in the car had been drinking on top of the fact that I allowed a gun to be placed in the car with a group of 17 to 19 year olds. I did not personally intend to cause anyone's death, nevertheless someone did die directly because of my failure to be responsible in that situation which I am very sorry for."

It broke my heart when I visited Mr. Sanders several years ago and listened to him reminisce about his life before he was 17, the church picnics and other neighborhood activities he enjoyed, and his loving relationship with his grandmother and others. This was the only real life he has ever had. He recently lost his dear godmother on Jan. 17 of this year and has been extremely depressed since that time.

Mr. Sanders is one of hundreds of juvenile lifers incarcerated in this state. We support all legislation that would outlaw locking up juveniles for life, subjecting them to actual death in prison. This is a practice condemned by the United Nations, and the United States is one of only two countries in the world that carries out this practice. Studies have shown that juveniles are not yet fully developed in social and mental understanding and practice. Studies also show that those who have served long prison sentences are highly unlikely to recidivate.

We are asking that the Honorable Senate Judiciary please allow the bills referenced during this hearing onto the floor of the Senate. Action on this situation is long overdue. Our legislators must show compassion to individuals like Mr. Sanders. He must be finally allowed to see "his light come shining," and be able to carry on the remainder of his life with his daughter, grandchildren and loved ones.

Sincerely,

*Diane Bukowski*  
Diane Bukowski and Timothy Greer  
Friends of Edward Sanders  
9000 E. Jefferson #10-9, Detroit

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "Timothy Greer".